

## ***SECTION 13 – MONITORING PLAN***

Pursuant to Section 106(e)(1) of the Federal Clean Water Act, the SWQB has established appropriate monitoring methods, systems and procedures in order to compile and analyze data on the quality of the surface waters of New Mexico. In accordance with the New Mexico Water Quality Act, the SWQB has developed and implemented a comprehensive water quality monitoring strategy for the surface waters of the State.

The monitoring strategy establishes the methods of identifying and prioritizing water quality data needs, specifies procedures for acquiring and managing water quality data, and describes how these data are used to progress toward three basic monitoring objectives: to develop water quality-based controls, to evaluate the effectiveness of such controls and to conduct water quality assessments.

The SWQB utilizes a rotating basin system approach to water quality monitoring. In this system, a select number of watersheds are intensively monitored each year with an established return frequency of every five years.

The SWQB maintains current quality assurance and quality control plans to cover all monitoring activities. This document, “Quality Assurance Project Plan for Water Quality Management Programs” (QAPP) is updated annually (SWQB/NMED 2001). Current priorities for monitoring in the SWQB are driven by the 303(d) list of streams requiring TMDLs. Short-term efforts will be directed toward those waters which are on the EPA TMDL consent decree (Forest Guardians and Southwest Environmental Center v. Carol Browner, Administrator, US EPA, Civil Action 96-0826 LH/LFG, 1997) list and which are due within the first two years of the monitoring schedule.

Once assessment monitoring is completed, those reaches showing impacts and requiring a TMDL will be targeted for more intensive monitoring. The methods of data acquisition include fixed-station monitoring, intensive surveys of priority water bodies, including biological assessments, and compliance monitoring of industrial, federal and municipal dischargers, and are specified in the SWQB Assessment Protocol (SWQB/NMED revised 10-2-00).

Long term monitoring for assessments will be accomplished through the establishment of sampling sites that are representative of the waterbody and which can be revisited every five years. This gives an unbiased assessment of the waterbody and establishes a long term monitoring record for simple trend analyses. This information will provide time relevant information for use in 305(b) assessments and to support the need for developing TMDLs.

The approach provides:

- a systematic, detailed review of water quality data, allowing for a more efficient use of valuable monitoring resources.
- information at a scale where implementation of corrective activities is feasible.
- an established order of rotation and predictable sampling in each basin, which allows for enhanced coordinated efforts with other programs.
- program efficiency and improvements in the basis for management decisions.

It should be noted that a basin would not be ignored during its four-year sampling hiatus. The rotating basin program will be supplemented with other data collection efforts.

Data will be analyzed and field studies will be conducted to further characterize acknowledged problems, and TMDLs will be developed and implemented. Both long term and field studies can contribute to the 305(b) report and 303(d) listing processes.

The SWQB maintains current quality assurance and quality control plans to cover all monitoring activities. The document, *Quality Assurance Project Plan for Water Quality Management Programs* is updated and certified annually by US EPA Region 6. In addition, the SWQB identifies the data quality objectives required to provide information of sufficient quality to meet the established goals of the program.

The following schedule is a draft for the sampling seasons through 2002 and will be followed in a consistent manner to support the New Mexico Unified Watershed Assessment (UWA) and the Nonpoint Source Management Program. This sampling regime allows characterization of seasonal variation and thorough sampling in spring, summer, and fall for each of the watersheds.

- 1998 Jemez Watershed, Upper Chama Watershed (above El Vado), Cimarron Watershed, Santa Fe River, San Francisco Watershed
- 1999 Lower Chama Watershed, Red River Watershed, Middle Rio Grande, Gila River Watershed (summer and fall), Santa Fe River
- 2000 Gila River Watershed (spring), Dry Cimarron Watershed, Upper Rio Grande 1 (Pilar north to the NM/CO border), Shumway Arroyo
- 2001 Upper Rio Grande 2 (Pilar south to Cochiti Reservoir), Upper Pecos Watershed (Ft Sumner north to the headwaters)
- 2002 Canadian River Watershed, San Juan River Watershed, Mimbres Watershed
- 2003 Lower Pecos Watershed (Ft. Sumner south to the NM/TX border including Ruidoso), Lower Rio Grande (southern border of Isleta Pueblo south to the NM/TX border)
- 2004 Rio Puerco Watershed, Closed Basins, Zuni Watershed